

Inventique®

The newsletter of Wessex Round Table of Inventors

August 2005

20-23 October BRITISH INVENTION SHOW www.thebis.org

Inventions take the BIScuit

130 INVENTIONS will be on display at the British Invention Show opening on Thursday 20 October at Alexandra Palace in London.

"This is our fourth exhibition and the level of interest has never been greater," said Kane Kramer, the show's organiser. "Participants have come from Croatia, Eire, Japan, Malaysia and across the UK."

● Tel: 01462 459999 info@thebis.org
www.britishinventionshow.com

Free WRTI membership

IN AN INITIATIVE aimed at encouraging innovation among the student population, the WRTI is now offering free membership to any bona fide student over the age of 18 studying at college or university.

Commencing this month and applicable to both part-time and fulltime students, the club will waive its £30pa membership fee and offer its resources to students wishing to progress their innovative ideas, products and prototypes.

"This is a significant move which I hope other clubs and associations will consider implementing," said chairman Richard Little.

● On page 2, Richard recounts some of the highlights experienced by the club during the past twelve months.

Next WRTI meeting

WEDNESDAY 7 SEPTEMBER

There is no August club meeting.
www.wrti.org.uk/events

Speak to me!

TALKING LABELS HELP THE MEDICINE GO DOWN...

WRTI MEMBER Brian Stickley has launched another addition to his Talking Products™ brand range onto the healthcare market with the Talking Label for Medication, an audible guide for identifying and taking medicines.

Targeted at the visually-impaired and partially-sighted, and those with reading difficulties, Talking Labels attach to standard packaging and allow users to record and store a voice message in any language.

Medicinal memory-jogger

The clear audible message can be replayed at any time at the touch of a button, enabling patients to identify individual medicines, the patient's name, dosage instructions and any precautions – of particular importance to those with multiple prescriptions requiring different dosage regimes. The message can be re-recorded at any time by patients or their pharmacists.

The easy-to-use device is only 9mm thick and little bigger than a credit card. It securely grips onto



WRTI member Brian Stickley displays his new Talking Label, with which medical patients can record their dosage instructions in any language

packaging, including standard pill boxes, without obstructing access.

The device may be stored either horizontally or vertically, and can even be attached to a key-ring or neck-strap. A message protection system is incorporated to avoid accidental erasure.

The Talking Labels™ concept was developed with the help of Business Link Wessex. Brian, who gained a DTI SMART award to help fund research into the project, has also been assisted by the product design team at the Faculty of Technology, Southampton Institute. ●

● **Talking Products Ltd**
Tel: +44 (0) 1794 516677
info@TalkingProducts.com
www.TalkingProducts.co.uk
● **LINKS:** http://www.solent.ac.uk/news/news_detail.asp?NewsID=9265
● http://www.thisishampshire.net/hampshire/southampton/campaigns/SOTON_CAMPAIGNS_ACCESS8.html

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Wessex Round Table of Inventors meet at 6.30pm on the second Wednesday of each month at Southampton Institute, East Park Terrace SO14 0RP

VIEW FROM THE CHAIR

AS I MENTIONED at last month's AGM, the past twelve months have been spectacular ones for the WRTI. In July last year we celebrated Brian Stickley's win at *Innovention 2004* for developing Talking Products™ – including Talking Tins and Talking Labels – out of his Romsey company.

Brian Flynn was voted Joint Overall Winner at the *British Invention Show 2004 Grand Final* awards ceremony in October with his Autocone™, which has gone on to win small firms loan guarantee scheme approval and PARK funding, and is now undergoing trials at the Transport Research Laboratory.

Other WRTI successes at the show included Shamal Barzanji's Gravity Pump™ – which gained an International Bronze medal and is now being manufactured under licence – and an Industrial Gold Medal to Eddie Czerniak for his Czerniak Ducted Craft™.

Also in October, David Robson's Burnside Desktop Mobile™ won third place in the nation-wide BBC News 'Eureka moments' poll.

And to come full circle, Joe Silver's LifeLock® won first prize in the business category at *Innovention 2005* in June.

Within the club, Trevor Baylis kindly agreed to become patron of the WRTI in March, and we sponsored the inaugural *David Nicholas Innovation Award*, won last month by Southampton Institute graduate Luca Giancardo with his tftMouse™ (David would have loved Luca's superb invention).

Club meetings have seen some inspirational guest speakers, plus visits to the Rolls-Royce factory near Goodwood and our local Aviation Museum. The club's Inventors' Clinics have also proved popular and worthwhile and these will continue.

Finally, congratulations to Mike Overy for continuing to develop wrti.org.uk, which recently enticed our newest member Gerardo Gómez into joining from... Mexico. Sincerely, Richard

RICHARD LITTLE, Chairman

INVENTORATOR Nicola Rathbone

Preparing your invention

IRELAND'S FIRST LADY HAS SOME SUGGESTIONS

AS PART OF the assistance I provide for inventors in Ireland, I run monthly clinics to help signpost where to go and what to do next once they have had an idea, writes Nicola Rathbone.

A recurring theme is inventors wanting to licence the product straight away, with no work done on the idea at all (apart from possibly a basic prototype). Crucially, they will not have undertaken any patent or prior art searches – feeling that, if they haven't seen it in the shops, it hasn't been thought of before.

Titanic decisions

As many readers are probably aware, only two out of every 1000 worldwide patents go to market at all, and only 30% of these achieve any significant sales – so there's a great big hidden iceberg of prior art waiting to sink an inventor's chances of a patent. And without a strong patent, inventors have nothing to licence and nothing for investors to put their money into.

This is why, in my opinion, a patent search should be undertaken before even making the prototype of an idea, because if inventors cannot protect it, all the money they spend on developing and marketing it will be for somebody else's benefit.

HUMORESQUE

Quotes attributed to scientist Steven Wright:

- I woke up one morning and all my stuff had been stolen... and replaced by exact duplicates.
- I'd kill for a Nobel Peace Prize.
- 42.7% of all statistics are made up on the spot.
- All those who believe in psychokinesis, raise my hand.
- I almost had a psychic girlfriend, but she left me before we met.
- OK, so what's the speed of dark?
- I intend to live forever. So far, so good...

Business? What business?

As for the rest of the work required to refine an idea – market research, working prototype, manufacturing costs, distribution routes and so on (in other words, all the data needed for a full business plan) – many inventors do not see the point of doing that work for themselves, and feel that anyone they approach should have enough of an idea themselves.

WRONG-G-G!

Presenting an idea without such back-up data is like entering a horse for its maiden race in the Cheltenham Gold Cup: it has no form, no bloodline, no known trainer and no known jockey. Imagine then asking a total stranger to put up £100,000 – or more – to bet on your horse to win...

By undertaking meaningful research, inventors provide investors with a reason to take a gamble on an outsider. Those investors will still be gambling, but the more blanks an inventor fills in, the more the odds shorten.

Good luck. I hope you all manage to complete your research and reach the winner's circle! ●

© Nicola Rathbone 2005

● *An inventor in her own right, Nicola Rathbone runs The Inventor's Garage and is President of the Inventors Association of Ireland. This year the Association took on The Virtual Company (TVC) Licence for Ireland, changing their name to Inventnet Ireland in the process. Inventnet's inaugural Inventors Club was opened at Dublin City University in January by the WRTI's Brian Flynn. UK and Ireland delegate to the Geneva Palexpo exhibition, Nicola has judged Ireland's national competitions, Tomorrow's World and the British Invention Show.*

● www.inventors-garage.com
www.inventnetireland.com

WRTI membership fees

WRTI annual membership fees of £30 are now due from members and associate members for the year to 31 July 2006.

Membership is open to anyone over the age of 18 with an interest in inventing. Associate membership is open to individuals or companies who are not themselves inventors but who wish to offer support services.

● Richard Penson, membership secretary
membership@wrti.co.uk
www.wrti.org.uk/membership

Special offer

WRTI MEMBERS are reminded that RTCoopers Solicitors are offering comprehensive Shareholders Agreements to WRTI member companies for only £499 – an offer that expires on 30 September.

● RTCoopers Solicitors, 5 Telfords Yard
 6/8 The Highway, London E1W 2BS
 Tel: 020 7488 2985 Fax: 020 7488 2102
enquiry@rtcoopers.com
www.rtcoopers.com

AN EVENT WITH TEETH

ENTREPRENEURS and business owners are invited to present their plans for new ventures, or developments to their existing businesses, to a panel of experts on 19 October, when the Hampshire and Isle of Wight branch of the Institute of Directors present an entrepreneurs event entitled: Who will step into our version of the Dragon's Den?

The five volunteers selected to pitch their concepts at this (non-confrontational) event will benefit from free on-the-spot advice, pre-presentation coaching, mentoring, funding information and other business needs.

If you or someone you know wish to be considered, please contact Sue Robinson
 Tel: 01489 589 924
sue.robinson@cdata.co.uk
 ● Wednesday 19 October, 4pm
 The Rose Bowl, Botley Road, West End Hampshire (£18.00pp incl refreshment).
 Tel: 023 8047 3500/2429 to attend the event as a member of the audience.

Southern comfort

TECHNOLOGY NETWORK'S SEPTEMBER LAUNCH

THE CENTRE FOR Enterprise and Innovation (CEI) at the University of Southampton is to launch the Southern Technology Network (STN) in September as a resource to aid communications between technology- and science-based businesses, support agencies and higher education institutions.

The Network's launch at 6pm in the Turner Sims Concert Hall, University of Southampton on 8 September, will outline the opportunities for developing research with the University.

Aimed at businesses in the region bounded by Basingstoke in the north to Ventnor in the south, and by Chichester in the east to Poole in the west, companies and organisations will be invited to use the Network's website to post events, manage distribution lists, host news sites, post job ads, market their technology and products, and identify local companies working in their sectors.

STN hope that groups such as the Hampshire Economic Partnership Innovation Group, Solent Synergy, the Wessex Round Table of Inventors and other business-lead organisations will also access these facilities and help others network – either online or at STN events.

Entrepreneurial activity

The Centre for Enterprise and Innovation (CEI) is the focus of entrepreneurial activity within the University of Southampton, where technology transfer and the

enterprise agenda have been identified as key tenets of the University's business strategy.

Formed in September 2000, the CEI now employs 20 advisors focusing on business management, IP protection and management, commercial and legal advice, contract confidentiality and funding advice. Specialists seconded from investment partners WessexBio and IP2IPO also act as advisors.

CEI staff have significant experience in commerce and industry and of running their own businesses (director Tony Raven's start-ups included such companies as Diomed, Scientific Generics and Summit Technologies).

Running to seedcorn

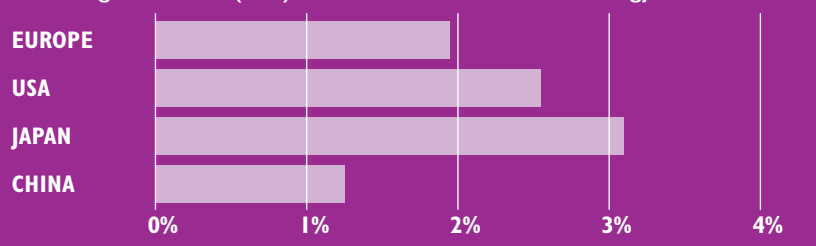
The Sulis Seedcorn Fund provides support for early-stage commercialisation of research generated by the Universities of Bath, Bristol and Southampton. The Fund offers resources to enhance the commercial potential of specific products or services, licensing and the sale of intellectual property.

In addition, Southampton Asset Management (SAM), the University's equity-holding vehicle, is also managed through the CEI, with a board of experienced senior executives who also act as advisors to the government. SAM makes investment decisions on behalf of the university and its funding partner IP2IPO.

● Tel: 023 8059 3095
info@cei.soton.ac.uk
www.cei.soton.ac.uk

The price of innovation

Percentage of wealth (GDP) devoted to science and technology in 2003.



SOURCE: EU/NEW SCIENTIST MAGAZINE

CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE Southampton Solent University

City's second site

MORE TO SOUTHAMPTON THAN MEETS THE EYE

SOUTHAMPTON INSTITUTE officially changes its name to Southampton Solent University on 15 August. The new university (Southampton's second) has 16,000 students and offers undergraduate and postgraduate degrees across a wide range of disciplines, including business, computing, construction, design, digital communication, engineering, maritime, law, finance, management, marketing, media communications, sport, tourism and leisure, visual and performance arts and human sciences.

The new university is among Southampton's largest employers with 1,300 staff and an annual turnover of approximately £60m.

Although Southampton Institute's

origins go back to the formation of a private school of art in 1855, it only became an independent higher education corporation in 1989, when there were only 5,000 students – most of them part-time – and no fulltime degree courses.

The Institute awarded more than 100 research degrees and has now enrolled 100 research degree students into the new university. 10% of all students are from outside the UK, with most of those from outside the European Union. ●

● **Southampton Solent University**
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www.solent.ac.uk/news

EU Directive on the patentability of computer-implemented inventions (CII)

Following Tim Frain's article in June's issue of *Inventique* (page 4: *The road to patent perdition*), the European Parliament voted on 6 July to reject the Council Common Position on the proposal for a Software Patent Directive by an overwhelming 648 votes to 14. This means that the position on software patents in Europe remains unchanged.

Although the original intention of the EU Commission in proposing the Directive was simply to harmonise the patentability of computer-implemented inventions law in Europe, the text adopted by the European Parliament at first reading introduced many amendments proposed by opponents of CII patents. These amendments dramatically changed the whole thrust of the Directive, resulting in a text which diminished, virtually to vanishing point, effective patent protection in the digital technology industries. Source: www.ipr-helpdesk.org

BOOK OF THE MONTH

Oxford Dictionary of Scientific Quotations

by William Bynum and Roy Porter
OUP ISBN 0198584091 £30

"A great resource and a distractingly good way to waste time."

– Maggie McDonald,
New Scientist magazine.

WEBSITE OF THE MONTH

www.thepointmagazine.co.uk

The Point collates and disseminates business information throughout the Portsmouth/Southampton region, and includes an invaluable diary of networking events.

Ear recognition may beat face biometrics

EAR-SHAPE ANALYSIS could be better than face recognition at automatically identifying people. Mark Nixon, a biometrics expert at the University of Southampton, has developed a technique to capture the shape of an ear and represent it in code. Unlike faces, ears do not change shape over time.

In an initial study using pictures of the ears of 63 people, Nixon and his colleague David Hurley found their method to be 99.2% accurate. Nixon thinks this could be improved. The technique could be used to identify people from CCTV footage, or incorporated into mobile phones to identify the caller, says Nixon.

The study is due to be published in the journal *Computer Vision and Image Understanding*.

Source: *New Scientist* magazine, 23 July'05

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